116

/For the sources of the informants relating the various origin myths of the Bellacoola, see footnotes in Chapter VI, category 116, pp. 292-340./

121 128 If I were to investigate and report on the Bella Coola at the present time, I would undoubtedly be influenced by many years of contact with American anthropologists and their work. I would assume a greater knowledge of North-West coast institutions, less interest in the details of ceremonial rites, and it would be impossible not to avoid comparisons with, and observations upon, the theoretical implications of many of the facts recorded. But though every field investigator is strictly objective as to the facts he collects, yet his interests, and his method of presenting them, are coloured by his background; in my case, by the older school of English anthropology. On the whole, I think this is fortunate. It means that the Bella Coola are portrayed as I saw them when I came fresh to a new field, practically uninfluenced by problems of North-West coast culture, and fully prepared to throw myself into their life. They were "my people," not a group in which I was interested because they had, or had not, certain culture traits with which I was concerned. In the course of my teaching experience, furthermore, I have wished repeatedly to give serious students detailed field monographs in which are recorded the interwoven social, religious, and folk-lore concepts of a people, the sum-total of their mental life, collected by one man at one time. This I have tried to do for the Bella Coola.

123 Following the English tradition, I wish to record how this material was collected. Before leaving for British Columbia, [115] I was advised by the late H. I. Smith, who had worked in the area, to talk to Joshua Moody (see Plate 1), an elderly Bella Coola Indian with whom Smith had worked. On explaining to Joshua that I had come to record in permanent form the traditions and lore of *his* people, Joshua grinned broadly and promised his help. Unfortunately, he spoke only a few words of English. I tried interpreter after interpreter, Indian and white, with only fair success, and my difficulties increased with the [464] opening of the canning season and the consequent employment [122] of the younger men and women. I was urged to learn the [198] Chinook jargon, which serves widely as a *lingua franca* on the

whom I was working. Before I left, this reality contained so much Bella Coola that it was unintelligible to white people who knew Chinook alone.

Attention to the concertina would have interfered seriously with my work during the summer of 1901 if two men had not been confined to the village, Captain Schooner owing to an injured wrist, and Jim Pollard by the illness of his wife. These two men were willing to work half a day apiece without jealousy. Each was intensely proud of the traditions of his people and, realizing that their culture was passing away, was glad to assist in making it permanent in writing. An intimacy sprang up between Captain Schooner (see Plate 3) and myself culminating in my adoption, a circumstance which established and improved my position in the community. In this way I was enabled to collect a large amount of material before July when it was necessary for me to leave for the east.

In September, 1901, when I returned to Bella Coola, I found that Captain Schooner had died a few months before, respected alike by white men and Indians. With the aid of others with whom I had made contact it was possible to obtain much new information, as well as to clear up many obscure points. The previous summer I had been so overwhelmed with material that I had no time to collate it in the field and the gaps only became apparent after a year's study. The men were so busy hunting and laying in stocks of fire-wood, however, that I found it difficult to arrange regular hours of work, but this was a trifle compared with the initial difficulties of my first trip. In October, when the Bella Coola began to prepare for the winter dances, they had to appoint a successor to Captain Schooner, who had played a leading part in their production. Having been adopted by him, it was suggested that I take his place, a proposition which I readily accepted. This admitted me to the ranks of the old men, and I imagine that my interest encouraged them to hold more ceremonials than they had done for several years. In former times, a number of the older men used to devote much time and thought to the composing, re-

predecessor here. I can only glimpse to record my deep obligation and gratitude to each of these four. Dr. D. Jenness, who succeeded Dr. Sapir, was most co-operative. To Bella Coola, I was received with uniform kindness by the whole inhabitants, particularly Miss. Chesson, Mr. and Mrs. Burt Robson, and Mr. and Mrs. Andy Christensen.

Finally, and most important of all, I wish to express my appreciation to the Bella Coola themselves. Without their generous, kindly and helpful co-operation, this book could never have been written. I came as an entire stranger; they received me as a friend and a guest; and I left with intense regret. My chief friends were Joshua Moody, Captain Schooner, and Jim Pollard, but I was also greatly assisted by Mr. Willie Mack, Mr. and Mrs. Tallio Charlie, and Mr. and Mrs. Lame Charlie. To a host of others I am indebted in only a slightly less extent. The aid and friendship of these men and women is one of my pleasantest memories, and one which I wish to record in all gratitude and appreciation.

In the actual publication of this complicated manuscript, I have likewise been fortunate in receiving co-operation and help. The University of Toronto Press accepted it for publication during the war, facing—and overcoming—the inevitable shortage of materials and of skilled craftsmen. Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining the type for phonetic symbols; to avoid undue duplication all native words, whether proper or common names, have been printed in italics. It is a tribute to the Press that it has completed the work. I am especially indebted to several former members of the editorial staff: Mrs. Hewitt, who supervised the initial editing, and her assistants, Mrs. Hackett and Mrs. Busek. Mr. Weir, foreman of the composing room of the Press, has surmounted endless difficulties with enthusiasm and ingenuity. I am also grateful to Miss Harman, Associate Editor, who took the responsibility for final production details. Mr. Burns, General Manager of the Press, and Professor Brown, Editor, have both been helpful and co-operative throughout.

[illegible] (1960-[illegible]) [illegible]
[illegible] in Canada [illegible]

PLATE I

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Photograph by H. J. Smith, National Museum of Canada

Joshua Moody

[p 26 (B)]

Library Records E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NEA Bellevue NEA

PLATE 9

115 ●
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Photograph by H. I. Smith, *National Museum of Canada*

Captain Schooner

[4 26 (c)]

1:Mc Dermith E-9 (1922-1924) 1948
NEB DeDerm NEB

PLATE 4

115
142
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302

Photograph by H. I. Smith, National Museum of Canada

Jim Pillard

[#26 (0)]

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NEs Bellecoola NEs

use his own discretion as to the design. At the top he always places the bird or animal cloak in which his first ancestor, traced patrilineally, came to this earth. Beneath this is the cloak of his mother's first ancestor if it differs from his father's. There are no fixed rules for other representations. Sometimes a man wishes to display the cloaks of the first ancestors of his wife, or wives; more often, the designs are of creatures with which his own ancestors came in contact after reaching this earth.[1] One of the first settlers, *Smaoas* (I, p. 331), married a Bella Bella woman from whom he obtained a ceremony connected with a whale, an animal which has often been used on the totem-poles of his descendants. The lower figures on totem-poles often represent creatures from which a recent ancestor of the chief obtained supernatural assistance. Consequently, the number of designs which may be used is legion, and the order of portrayal is immaterial. Moreover, Bella Coola art is not sufficiently realistic for designs to be easily recognized, nor is there standard conventionalization of little used animals; so it follows that the designs on totem-poles are often unidentifiable.[2] This is of little consequence, since their value rests neither upon the artistic skill exhibited, nor even upon their significance in connection with the owner's ancestral myth, but upon the goods expended to validate the display.

All Bella Coola totem-poles are carved from the trunks of huge cedars, with the wood cut away so that the designs stand out in high relief. The carvers are allowed great latitude both in choice of form and colouring, hence there is wide variation

[1] *Ancestralia* is the term applied to animals with which ancestors came in contact, other than their cloaks.

[2] This statement represents the layman's point of view, that is, of the Bella Coola who was not himself a carpenter-sculptor. It is probable that an expert would have greater facility in recognizing the conventionalized forms used by his associates, although the whole pattern of Bella Coola culture was opposed to extreme standardization. Unfortunately, wood-carving, in fact art work of every kind, had degenerated to such an extent that only one man with any recognized skill in that respect was still living when this study was made. He was both available and uncooperative, so that it was impossible even to collect examples of his work, still less to record his interpretations of the designs of totems or other objects carved by his predecessors.

h:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

515 presents to the singers and heralds who have rendered assist-
574 ance. Instead of dispersing immediately, the guests may remain
535 to gamble or wrestle. Since there is no solemnity attached to
[533] the affair, it is a time for indulgence in amusements of all kinds.
[525] These conclude the chief features of the *a'alk* dances. Prob-
[524] ably they once played an important part in the lives of the
[178] Bella Coola, but with the increase in importance of the *nuxoi*, they have decayed into little more than a form of entertainment.

A'alk origin myths

551 Theoretically, every Bella Coola *a'alk* should be able to
515 record the myth in which his name is embodied, but few can
773 do so. Of course if a man has been able to validate both ancestral and *a'alk* names from the same myth, that is his authorization for both. In many cases a myth is split, and the portion containing an *a'alk* appellation is given to some member of the ancestral family, other than the chief able to validate the most important ancestral name. In such a case, the *a'alk* can record little more than that his designation came down with a specified group of the first people. This, for example, is the explanation given by a Kimsquit *nexpaul* for his name *Ixcaklotle* which came to earth with *Smanux* (I, p. 331) in the beginning of time. Another Kimsquit *a'alk*, *Thetpakaw*, whose prerogative is to perform the dance of that name, states that it was brought down by *Sinsqual* (I, p. 316), who assumed the designation of *Thetpakaw* after its performance. This early settler had the additional name of *Wi'talas*.

539 The two following origin myths were obtained in some detail:

Once,[1] long, long ago, *Algantlen* came to the conclusion that it was not good for the inhabitants of the world to be afraid of supernatural beings. He decided that the best way to dispel this dread would be to arrange a marriage between his daughter, *Sumaua*, and a mortal; so he

[115] [1] Related by Mrs. Willie Black. European elements have obviously been
[177] incorporated into the first part of this legend, though the narrator considered the whole tale to be ancient.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

brothers have the right, moreover, to hunt and collect food in the places used by these first ancestors. The areas so authorized are:

Ataxlqimux: the mountain where they first came to earth.

Okpowlqy: a valley leading into the main valley of the Kimsquit River where *Omqumkilda* was accustomed to hunt.

Nalak ôôl: a valley where *Imamut*'s wives used to pick berries.

Lymuk: a level tract of country on the bank of the Kimsquit River twenty-eight miles from its mouth. No people landed here and *Imamut* pre-empted it as a hunting-ground.

Nalqa ôôl: another valley where *Imamut*'s wives used to pick berries.

The place in the Kimsquit River where their salmon-weir was erected, and the spot where they caught eulachon.

The length and wealth of detail embodied in this myth raises the question of whether it is one of the usual type, or represents a combination of several stories strung together and related by a man eager to glorify the traditions of his own ancestors. It was received from Jim Pollard, a Kimsquit Indian, descended from *Imamut*, and himself the user of this name, a valuable and reliable informant. Jim is a man of great ability, who has given more attention than any other Indian of either Bella Coola or Kimsquit, and who, accordingly, has been able to validate very fully his ancestral myths and the names embodied therein. Owing to the deaths of his relatives, Jim has been able to use designations and portions of this legend which otherwise would certainly have belonged to other people. In this respect it, therefore, represents an amalgamation, but one of a legitimate nature. Theoretically, every myth would be complete if it were not for the parts possessed by others, and the aim of every wise Bella Coola is to seek the return of these pieces by judicious marriage. Jim has been able to achieve this by the death of his relatives and the assistance of his wife, herself a descendant of *Imamut*. Before the coming of the white man and the consequent dwindling of population, it is unlikely that any one person would have the duly validated right to tell a myth of this length, but theoretically it was possible, and might have been done by anyone as superior to his fellows as this man is to the present inhabitants of Kimsquit.

ORIGIN MYTH OF *Nuxwiłᵐ*

Among the first people dispatched to this earth were four brothers, *Hamut, Wuiłx, Mitem,* and *Hiłaiłx*, who came to anglo and settled in *Nuxwiłx*, the site of the present Mission Cannery, Kimsquit. Before

ᵐRelated by Jim Pollard.

Boas/McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEb Bellacoola NEb

[The Dance of NoaKanim]

approaches the Bella Coola River, and proceeds up it, beneath the surface of the water, invisible to all. Its destination is *Imaim a*, whence its captain leaps to *Nasqulemaiste* to await the coming of *Alquesiem*. The crew consists of a number of supernatural beings, who will be described in connection with the ceremonial on the night of *nalaem*. This canoe, which brings the salmon and berries to Bella Coola, has four masts but no sails, and is enormous. Whenever the weather is fine, *Nuákynem* lowers first one side and then the other of his craft so that the salmon may leave; after swimming around for a time they always return, refreshed by their exercise. In former times when people were purified by ceremonial chastity, several succeeded in seeing the craft, and from them it is known that it is about six hundred yards in length, that it travels without leaving a wake, that any canoes passing near are sucked along after it, and that a mallard duck, perched on the bow, quacks continuously. Intelligent informants agreed that the bringing of the salmon during the autumn was inconsistent, but they could offer no explanation. One man believed that this was pointed out not many years ago by a man whose patron was *Nuákynem*, but that the marshals requested him not to upset established ritual by too much logic. *Nuákynem* is patron for several *kukuaiat*, who are believed by the uninitiated to be able to see his canoe. As he passes up the river the *kusiut* dances begin.

It is unnecessary to describe the full ritual in each village, as this is supposed to be identical, and probably contains only slight variations, if any. In *Tsmait* the *kusiut* who has the prerogative of seeing *Nuákynem* is a certain *Kwalile c*,* in *Kimsquit*, *Skaiowaeum*,* and in *Skúsai*, *Kemtoum*. Although

*Details of this dance were learned from the father of *Kwalile c*, who remarked that the name was a family possession. Several months later an old woman referred to the leading of this designation by her father and said that the presence must have failed to return it. River failings are often caused by disputes of this kind.

*Meaning "Cloud Covered," a reference to the invisibility of his person, as if the latter were hidden by clouds. Many *kusiut* names have significances of this type.

[illegible] Ilwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

[The Cannibal Dance]

among the Bella Bella, Fort Rupert, and Rivers Inlet people. in Bella Coola a poor man may be the most dreaded al of all, if he has been able duly to validate and per- s right in this respect. Nor is the dance carried out e same rigour in Bella Coola as among the tribes of the ast.

ritual of different prerogatives varies to such an extent eral accounts must be given, in spite of the repetitions is form of presentation entails. On account of the of time necessary, a Cannibal dance usually begins the season. The following describes the manner in *Kämätslaks* of Kimsquit, who can bite the living, car- his rite; it was obtained from his brother, who is hly conversant with the details. It will be convenient to *Kämätslaks* as X, and to use the present tense out.

eeting is held at which the marshals and others choose, ment with X and his relatives, a day suitable for him nence his performance. Under normal circumstances ome *qoilum* that a marshal announces that he can hear , and on the following evening, when the ritual has npleted, the uninitiated are startled to hear continuous g from the slopes of the mountains near the village. truments used are of the usual bladder type, but the wn-out sound, termed *Aiilära*, is said to be the voice indly supernatural woman, *Snitsmän-a*.[1]

[1] ...ade function of this being seems to be the restoring to life of those who have been killed in the performance of *hamat* rites. The Bella Coola ...in whether or not she is identical with *Hamätsätse-a*. The noise which ... coming is produced by the whistles of four *hamatsa* who throughout the ... the forests and mountains within ear-shot of the village. By bending ... up and down, they are able to increase the weirdness and apparent ... of the sound. The four travel in single file; the leader blows, and when ... is nearly exhausted he presses the hand of the second man, who starts ...orthwith, while the original leader drops to the rear. As the second ...ears, he signals in the same way to the third, and so on; in this way ...ng is continuous, and the uninitiated are convinced that it cannot be ...mortals, even if such an idea should occur to them. If a non-member ...t the four, they would at once kill him or make him a prisoner, keeping ...night until he could be initiated into the society.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

songs are sung, all that are needed when a Cannibal does not go to the land above. 575* 796* 787

On the following day, *gotlim*, the masks are manufactured and the ritual proceeds in the normal manner. In the evening the uninitiated are invited to watch the dances, at which X is the first to perform, lengthening his face and protruding his lips to their greatest extent in order to frighten his beholders.

The ritual of the next evening, *nałuxam*, corresponds to the usual pattern. Before the entry of the uninitiated, X has concealed himself so that nothing can detract from their awe at sight of the masked figures. *Alquntăm* stands in state behind the fire, sometimes announcing his own name, while *Ano'lik-wełsaix* moves to and fro, adding to the solemnity of the occasion with her explanations, echoed by the heralds. *Alqotlxes*, represented with blood-stained lips, moves around the fire, restrained by the three Holders, and the audience is told that this is how they act in the land above. When the guests have gazed sufficiently on these marvels they are sent away, and the masks are burnt in the usual manner, accompanied by the gentle singing of one of X's songs. Late at night a number of *łałaxsiut* go with X to the sidewalk outside his house, where they expel his call by pressing upwards with their hands against his stomach and calling *hoip*.

For the rest of the winter X conducts himself in the manner of any *łaxsiut* who has danced. 575* 796* [424]

Although similar in outlines, the prerogatives enjoyed by Cannibals differ so considerably that no clear picture of the rites can be obtained without detailed descriptions of several. The following is an account of a dance carried out by *Łułalimut*, a biting Cannibal of *Nuqałst*. It was obtained from one of the marshals who, of course, understood the details of every performance. The origin of the name is unknown, although the informant believed that it had been created in this world by the chiefs in consequence of the manner in which a shaman ancestor of the dancer had been in the habit of biting people [115]

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

In the course of generations, *Snuuq* has combined with his self-anthropophagic prerogative that of eating dogs. As already mentioned, such a merging of rights, obtained from different ancestors, is by no means uncommon. The following account of the manner in which he carries out (or carried out, for the dance has not been performed for a number of years) his rite was obtained from one of the Kimsquit marshals. Many details are omitted which have been fully described in former Cannibal dances. It will be convenient to refer to *Snuuq* as X.

As with other Cannibals, when the call comes to X he begins to cry out and the uninitiated are expelled from his house, but not before they have seen him sink his teeth into his own arm, and apparently inflict a serious wound. In reality the Cannibal usually cuts himself in anticipation, so that the application of his teeth merely serves to reopen the incision and cause the blood to flow freely. Dogs are given to X, as to other dog-eating Cannibals, and he is escorted to every house, so that the uninitiated may stare with awe upon his blood-stained body and dripping jaws. Later, when he and the *ɬaɬaxiut* have returned to the Cannibal's home, a herald goes to every house, announcing that his fellows are going to fasten X. The rope used in this particular rite is long and thin, with a small loop in the centre for his neck. It is forced upon X with the usual struggling, and again the herald makes his round, announcing:

"We are measuring his arms for cords of dyed and undyed cedar-bark."

These too are placed upon him, and the *ɬaɬaxiut* march X, pinioned, to every house, while he growls and gives every indication of being half mad with anger at his bonds. He is taken back to his own house and at intervals throughout the day a herald informs all in the village of the number of dogs he has eaten, and of the number of wounds he has inflicted upon himself.

That night X eludes his captors and is carried away to the

[The Breaker Dance]

they do not like. No compensation can be claimed, on the theory that supernatural beings do not have to pay for any damage they may do. Although the property of some *ĕuĕuxsiut* is destroyed, the chief sufferers are the uninitiated; this serves to increase their fear and respect for the society with which such all-powerful beings are in league. After visiting every house in the village, the party returns to X's, where the masks are burnt, the call sent back, and the proceedings conclude in the usual manner.

A certain amount of information concerning the history of the Breaker dance was obtained from *Syuē*, the owner of the prerogative just described. He is a well-informed man, but the writer had no opportunity of comparing his beliefs with those of his associates, so the following must be regarded as unsubstantiated evidence. This man stated that the Breaker dance is the most important of all in Bella Bella, and that many Bella Coola prerogatives have been obtained from this source, although some of their first ancestors likewise enjoyed it. He further stated that the term, *walxista*, by which the Bella Coola always designate a Breaker, is of Bella Bella origin, and that the ancient Bella Coola term was *dxtsia*.[1] *Syuē* also told of an occasion when a number of Bella Bella, present on the *gotlem* night of a Bella Coola ceremony, were disturbed when eating by the thud of a stone thrown, from outside, against the wall of the back-room. Out rushed a number of *ĕuĕuxsiut*, incensed at the disrespect shown to their gathering. They caught the offender, but released him when he was found to be a Bella Bella Breaker, foolishly demonstrating his prowess. The marshals decided to retaliate and arranged with two Bella Coola Breakers to exercise their rights and destroy the canoes and food-boxes of their guests. They did so, and later paid for the damage. The Bella Coola were thus able to demon-

[1] *Syuē* and several of his children are the only Bella Coola known to the writer who habitually use the sound "x." For example, he says "*Ixulxi*," instead of "*Ixulsi*." He says that he is himself unable to distinguish any peculiarity in his own pronunciation, although other Bella Coola are aware of it.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEG Bellacoola NEG

Anhuciut send back X's call in the usual manner. Then, two by two, the masks are cast on to the fire and the ceremonial is over.

THE DANCE OF THE TALLY POSTS

As previously described, a tally post is erected in the land above for every Bella Coola at birth. As long as this memorial is upright and firm, the individual to whom it refers enjoys health and prosperity, but if it becomes crooked he falls ill. The uninitiated believe that several *Anhuciut* have the prerogative of climbing to the land above during the ceremonial season and straightening leaning tally posts. This is such a useful ability that it must have exercised great influence on the uninitiated in early days, but the rite has not been properly carried out since the smallpox epidemic in the last century. The following account was obtained from two old men who remembered the manner in which a certain *Ouikatl of Tcmaut* performed a year or two before "The Great Sickness." Neither of the informants was a *Anciut* at the time, but they were able to supplement their recollections of the dance with what they afterwards learnt when initiated, so the following account is probably accurate in outline though deficient in detail. It will be convenient to refer to the dancer as X, and describe the ceremony in the present tense. It was also performed at Kimsquit many years ago.

The rite resembles *Anciuem* dances in many respects. X must obtain the consent of the marshals during the preceding summer, and their permission is refused unless the prospective dancer is a man of proved discretion. If they agree, X asks a number of *Anhuciut* women to help him by making a very long and strong rope of nettle fibre. At intervals the work-women gather for the purpose in the back-room of X's house, taking care that no uninitiated see what they are doing. Every effort is made to ensure that there is no flaw in the rope as a break would be a serious matter, punishable by death.

Near the winter solstice the marshals choose a suitable time

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellecoola NE6

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assemble to witness the dance of *Alquntám*. This is his function in the land above, so it is natural for him to do the same in this world.

THE DANCE OF *Alquntám*'s FISHERMAN

Alquntám in the land above has a servant who uses a hand-net, *sutu*, in fishing for his master. He is accordingly known as *Alquntám*'s *Xoxoxtám*, "Fisherman," and is patron for a *ḥaxiat*.

THE DANCE OF THE TOP

The playful *Sáxulpumalh Alquntám* has a favourite toy consisting of a stick which can be made to spin between the hands. This top, if it may so be termed, is patron for some *ḥaxiat*. The writer was unable to learn how it is displayed on *nuhaitam*.

THE DANCE OF THE PETRIFIED HAMMER

The patron of one *ḥaxiat* is a hammer which in some way was changed to stone in the beginning of time when the Beila Coola River first flowed to the sea.

THE DANCE OF THE GRIZZLY BEAR

A *ḥaxiat* named *Bálxus* has, as patron, a grizzly bear resident in *Xmaqwa*'s house.

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VARIOUS ORIGIN MYTHS

In most cases *ḥaxiat* dances have been preserved until the present day, although the myths on which they depend have long since been forgotten, but the reverse is sometimes the case. The following myths, were recorded with few, or no details of the associated dances. In several cases, one of the same type has already been recorded, so that the significance will be apparent.

[178]

A COMPOSITE ORIGIN MYTH[115]

Long ago there lived in *Sisaa* a man and his wife who were powerful, prosperous, and able to give their children many good names. This

[115] Related by Mrs. Willie Mack.

[115]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

424 *Qwaixosān·i* moved to and fro among the chiefs as they were busying
* 575 themselves in preparations for leaving, and drew to herself the spirit of
* 796 every one of the party. As they pushed off from the shore, she put these
539 on a board which she set afloat behind them. It capsized in the first rapids, immersing the various spirits, and presently the canoes were upset and their occupants all drowned. The six orphans continued to live at *Stuix* where they intermarried with the poor people and in time the village increased in population and fully regained its old importance.

This myth has many points of resemblance with those described in vol. I, chap. IX. Each of the six orphans, and especially *Qwaixosān·i*, received the boon of supernatural good fortune, but the present given to the five took the form of a *kusiut* prerogative. The names so received are either in use at the present time or have but recently become dormant. *Nuxim* was used by the father's brother of the woman who related the story; *Song·mai* belongs to her son, a boy about eight years old; *Nuxem* is the property of another youth, related to the family; *Uxem* has been lent to a friend, subject to recall at any time, and *Qwaixosān·i* is used by a girl relative about twenty years of age. Each of these has the prerogative of carrying out the dance given to their ancestor at *Stuix*, long ago.

ORIGIN MYTH OF THE DANCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL CARPENTERS[115]

In the beginning *Ălqunăm* sent down to a point on the upper reaches of the Clearwater four brothers, *Ninilxamlaix*, *Waixxim*, *Ălqunăm*, and *Hai·la·hala* with several sisters whose names have been forgotten. They thought they were the first to reach this earth but presently, to their sorrow, saw *Tlăkwakila*, a man who had preceded them, and the women cried bitterly in their mortification. *Ălqunăm* had given *Ninilxamlaix* shamanistic power which he now used as he rubbed his hands over his sisters' faces to carry away their tears.

"Become fog," he said, as he held the palms of his tear-stained hands towards the land of the *To·yo·xi* people.

[821] That is why there are thick fogs in the vicinity of Alert Bay to the present day.

Ninilxamlaix and his relatives moved a short distance down the valley

[115] [115]Related by Steamboat Annie.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellhcoola NE6

long ago the *kusiut* society was composed of individuals regarded as having supernatural endowments, and who perhaps believed this themselves. In course of time their influence increased to such an extent that they were able to convince non-members of the supernatural origin of objects used in their ceremonial.

Unfortunately, information from Kimsquit was obtained almost exclusively from one old man, who, though a marshal well informed in *kusiut* matters and in many ways an almost ideal informant, had long since realized that the dances could be nothing more than representations, and it is possible that his remarks were coloured by this knowledge. Though he tended to minimize the attitude of belief with which the uninitiated regarded masked figures, yet he fully agreed with every statement made by the Bella Coola themselves with regard to the firm belief of non-members concerning the supernatural powers of the dancers. He also confirmed statements respecting punishment if an error should occur, and mentioned the shooting of a Bella Bella dancer who had allowed his mask to fall during a *tsaok* dance. As far as actual ritual is concerned, the differences in procedure between Bella Coola and Kimsquit are unimportant, and differences in belief are less than they appear at first sight. The Bella Coola *kukusiut* seem to have perfected their organization and to have been able to impress the uninitiated to a greater extent than their Kimsquit fellows, but the fundamentals of the society are identical.

Traditions concerning the early history of the society are probably of little value historically, but they are important as indicating the mental attitude of the Bella Coola. Considering the importance of the society there are relatively few accounts of what took place long ago; the Bella Coola know that it exists, believe that the rites are identical with those carried out by their ancestors for generations, and theorize no further. It was only in the beginning of time that things were radically different; it is believed that then all the people were endowed

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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CHAPTER II

SONGS

Introductory — Ssaask Songs — Xe'tla Songs — A'alk Songs — Nuxäxkämy Songs — Marriage Songs — Mourning Songs — Shaman Songs — Kusiut Songs — Non-Ceremonial Songs

Introductory

THE singing of songs is an essential part of all Bella Coola rites so that a study of them is important, entirely apart from their musical value. Their texts throw light on the beliefs of the performers, on the aims of the ceremonies, and, above all, give concrete instances of what the uninitiated are led to believe. This is particularly true of those used in *kusiut* dances, and for this reason all songs have been deferred until this chapter in which they can be grouped together.

The texts of songs are difficult to obtain. Snatches of many are remembered, but few individuals are acquainted with the complete version. A phonograph was used to record the music, and it was soon found that very few people were qualified to sing into the machine. Some became confused and forgot the words; some began to laugh; and some lacked the poise to attempt to sing. One elderly Kimsquit man, Jim Pollard, was found to be the best and most reliable singer, and he was used almost exclusively for phonographic work. Hence the records are stamped with his musical technique. Others approached his ability, but he alone preserved an art which had been common in former days. Over one hundred songs were obtained with the assistance of this man.

The text was always obtained before a song was sung into the machine, thus assuring that the recorded version agreed with the written words. Even with this check, the writing down of songs is extremely difficult. Choral endings are widely employed, consisting of non-essential suffixes inserted for musical effect. It was often impossible to record these in the

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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(a) Recorded as song VII D 34, National Museum of Canada; quartet, Reuben Schooner, leader, Jim Pollard, prompter and announcer, entered by *Tal* as Charlie and Steamboat Annie.
(b) Meaning: He is about to display an ancient right; the song was used at a potlatch.
(c) That is: Echo is pleased. This supernatural being was used as *tsiwaum*.
(d) Echo is said to display a proud and aristocratic disposition by trying to imitate the voices of others.
(e) That is: Human beings.
(f) Echo.
(g) That is: In his pride he is trying to imitate the voice of a great chief.

Song of T'mexlikē of Kimsquit(a)

A *Qoaqaēlalēlaxyaēlmaēlaxa* | *dzēdzēxaēxyaēlaēlē*
I am angry. | I shall presently display
na'aēlaēmlēxlēdēs(b)
the water that was brought down | *dzēnēlāmaxaēxaēmaēlēxlēdēs* | *dzēnēlāmaxaēxaēmaēlēxlēdēs*
by him(c) who came down(d).

[WORDLESS CHORUS] (e)

B *Sasaēlāmaē xaēxyaēxdēs* | *Ēēlāmaēlēxlēdēs* | *gēē'aēxaēxaēxaēmē*
Were ready for | *Ēēlāmaēlēxlēdēs*(f) | his dishes(g).

Yaēxēlāmaēxaēxlēdēs
It was sometimes as large as a pond(h).

[WORDLESS CHORUS]

C The third part of this song has been forgotten.

(a) Recorded as song VII D 43a, National Museum of Canada; singer, Jim Pollard.
(b) A figurative expression for slashes grease.
(c) Referring to one of the dancer's ancestors, a chief who descended to Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
(d) This song was used at a potlatch and is accordingly phrased grandiloquently.
(e) The wordless chorus consists of an oft-repeated name which is said to be the name of the pigeon. The singer was unaware of its application.
(f) *Ēēlāmaēlēxlēdēs* was a chief who, in the beginning of time, came down midway between Kimsquit and Kitlope.
(g) That is: Dishes, carved in form of his crest, were awaiting *Ēēlāmaēlēxlēdēs* on his arrival.
(h) A reference to the great abundance of slashes grease.

Song Used for xaēxaēxaē of Kimsquit(a)

A *Kēēlāmaēmaēxaēxēē* | *dē'aēmēxdēē* | *dzēdzēxaēxlēlāēlēē*
They(b) will come to receive | my valuable goods(c) | which *Ēēlāmaēlēxlēdēs*(d)

dzēēlāmaēlēxlēdēē
brought down.

[WORDLESS CHORUS]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

grave difficulties in explaining their customs, as the white man has in understanding them.

The writer was impressed by the brilliance shown by several of the natives. Joshua Moody, for example, is essentially the philosopher. More individualistic than most of his tribesmen, he was one of the first to adopt Christianity and has been a faithful follower of the new creed. Deeply interested in religious questions, he has stored up what has been told him of the Bible and pondered deeply on all problems of life. Not particularly practical, subject to fits of anger or moroseness, but with a meditative temperament which delights in seeking biblical parallels and synonyms for Bella Coola practices, his is the kind of mind which, in other walks of life, would have produced the professor of philosophy. Jim Pollard is quite another type. Essentially practical, he has devoted his energies to keeping abreast of changing conditions. He is the best singer and composer in Bella Coola, the best canoeman for miles; he has learnt to handle a motor-boat engine, to aid prospectors for minerals, and has succeeded in amassing and saving a considerable amount of money. Jim excelled all other informants in clearness and logical presentation of his explanations, though he showed a slight tendency, intelligible enough, to gloss over aspects which he knew would be considered unpleasant. If Jim had been a white man, he would undoubtedly have made his mark in the world of business. The late Captain Schooner differed from either of the preceding. Older than they, and unconverted, he, perhaps, came nearest to the original, uncontaminated Bella Coola type. Heavy in build, coarse in humour and expression, he had a heart of gold and was a fine example of a native gentleman. He was glad to assist most patiently in recording ancient lore, being intensely proud of the traditions of his ancestors. A friendship developed from this which is one of the writer's happiest memories. Often in the evenings life in general was discussed, the war, the rush of progress in big cities, the quest for wealth, the spread of white civilization, and the problems raised by the contact of peoples.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

115 Schooner lacked the mental acumen of Joshua and Jim, but
177 he revealed himself as a tribal patriarch, proud of his family's
[153] history and eager to assist his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but feeling himself lost and helpless in the struggle before them. With sadness, but without bitterness, he used to speak of the approaching end of Bella Coola culture, and his words brought home the tragedy which the spread of civilization brings to so many, and the responsibility resting upon the white people as a whole.

153 Until an intelligence test is devised to correlate the mental
115 ability of the white man with that of the native, it is impossible to compare the two scientifically. None the less, the writer deliberately expresses the opinion that Joshua Moody and Jim Pollard are two of the most brilliant men he has met in any walk of life. They are undoubtedly the most able of the Bella Coola; others have only slightly less ability, while the mass of the population compares favourably with an
178 average white community. Their ability, however, is definitely conditioned by their conservatism. Absolute trust in the traditions of their ancestors has checked speculation, as the established explanation is never questioned; new inventions, unauthorized by custom, have been regarded as almost sacri-
[626] legious; the force of public opinion, while valuable as a deterrent to anti-social practices, has effectively restrained innovations. The Bella Coola are a good example of a community where development has been atrophied by extreme conservatism fostered by religious beliefs.

105 Taking into account the material obstacles, the achievements of these people have not been insignificant. In former
[322] times, provided only with tools of stone and untempered copper, they built graceful canoes, made watertight boxes, hewed planks from mighty cedars, and erected large houses which called for considerable engineering skill. Judged by
[532] white standards, their carving and painting lacked artistic deli-
[535] cacy, but it required no mean ability to portray crest designs to meet their own standards. Passing from the purely mechanical

3: Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

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are apparently more recent comers to the coast than their neighbors and have not fully adopted this coast culture.

The following examples of sympathetic magic and witchcraft, collected during 1920 to 1923 among the Bellacoola, illustrate the extent of their belief in this direction. 114 121

Most of this information was given me by the late Captain Schooner, born about 1848, and Joshua Moody, born about 1868, both apparently full-blood Bellacoola Indians. Neither of them spoke English and both gave me the data in Chinook jargon, which I have endeavored to interpret and arrange in logical order, but have tried to render in as nearly as possible the Indian mode of thought, feeling and expression. Schooner was a pagan gentleman. Joshua has great knowledge of plants and animals, and is a Bellacoola scientist, but his great ambition and jealousy, combined with his disloyalty in giving up his own people's customs and adopting a very thin veneer of Christianity, color his statements relating to beliefs, although his plant and animal data have always withstood cross examination and comparison with the data supplied by other Indians. Alec Davis and Mrs. Willie Mack told of the toad. They do not talk English and spoke to me in Chinook jargon. Only the accounts about the grizzly bear skin and the bracelet of beaver skin, which were given me by Mrs. Stoesniger, were told in English. 115 [191] [191]

The material was not given as accounts of magic or witchcraft, but rather as part of the data regarding the properties of plants and animals of which I was endeavoring to collect as complete information as possible. 114 121

Joshua, who is even younger than Captain Schooner, remembers the time when Mr. John Clayton was the only white man living in the Bella Coola valley, and when they saw only one other white man every year or two. Consequently these men remember the old Bellacoola beliefs before they were much, if at all, affected by European ideas. 114 115

It will be noticed that magic among the Bellacoola is considered of use both for beneficial and injurious purposes, and that the materials giving effect to it are of both plant and animal origin. 789 754

S: Smith E-S (1920-1923)1929 NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Carrier NE9
Tsimshian NE15
Sekani NE14

MATERIA MEDICA OF THE BELLA COOLA AND NEIGHBOURING TRIBES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Harlan I. Smith

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the materia medica of four tribes of British Columbia, the Bella Coola of Bella Coola valley, the Gitksan of Skeena river, the Carrier who live in the territory behind both of these tribes, and the Sekani of the headwaters of Peace river. Among the Bella Coola the medicines are largely family possessions known to a few individuals only, so that two families may have different remedies for the same specific complaint; but this is not the case among the other tribes. Everywhere magical practices enter largely into the treatment of disease, but are not touched upon in this report. It was impossible for the Indians to diagnose many of their maladies, so that the identifications given here are in many cases problematical.

Most of the information relating to the Bella Coola was given the writer in 1920-22, by Joshua Moody, apparently a full-blood Bella Coola Indian, born about 1868. As he did not speak English he gave the data in Chinook jargon, which has been interpreted and arranged in logical order. Joshua is an Indian scientist with great knowledge of the local plants and animals. He remembers when Mr. John Clayton was the only white man living in Bella Coola valley, and when the inhabitants saw only one other white man every year or two. Consequently he can reveal the old Bella Coola material culture before it was much affected by European ideas.

Some of the information relating to the Bella Coola was given the writer in 1922-23 by the late Captain Schooner, also, apparently, a full-blood, born about 1849, who used the Chinook jargon. Abe Harris, Alexander Clayton, Louie Hall, and other Bella Coola Indians likewise gave information and corroboration.

Most of the information relating to the Southern Carrier Indians of Thatche was secured during 1920-1922 from Charlie Wood, also Pete Charlie or Handsome Charlie, a native of that place, born about 1871. Charlie used the peculiar form of broken or pidgen English commonly employed for communication between white and the Carrier and Chilcotin Indians of this region.

The information about the Sekani and the Northern Carriers of Hagwelget is from stray field notes kindly supplied by Mr. D. Jenness.

The information relating to the Gitksan was secured in 1923-24 from the late John Fowler and Abraham Fowler of Kitwanga, Luke Fowler and Dick Robinson of Hazelton, with additions and corroboration from a few others, all old Gitksan Indians, apparently full-blood. The information was secured mainly in English, although Abraham Fowler used also the Chinook jargon.

The method the writer employed was to submit specimens of the plants to his informants and question them concerning all their uses. Of the information thus obtained only the medicinal portion has been presented here. The plants were later identified by Mr. M. O. Malte, of the National Museum, Ottawa.

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

represent. Every time the sacred objects of a gens are shown to the people a potlatch is given. The sacred objects, although the property of the various gentes, must nevertheless be acquired by each individual. That is to say, every free person has the right to acquire a certain group of carvings and names, according to the gens to which he or she belongs. Slaves and slaves' children, also illegitimate children, could not become Sisaa'ka. A person cannot take a new carving, but must wait until it is given to him by his relatives—father, mother, or elder brother. Nesk'a-la'eta, to whom I owe my information regarding the gentes, and who is a member of the gens Iele'tsimxit of the Talio'mx, stated that he had received the raven when he gave his first potlatch. At his second potlatch he received the eagle. He hopes that his mother will give him the whale at his next potlatch, and will at the same time divulge to him the secrets connected with it. In course of time, he said, he might get even others from his brother; but if the latter's children should prove to be very good, and develop very rapidly, his brother would probably give his secrets to his children. At festivals, when a person acquires a new secret, he changes his name. Each person has two names, a Ki'xitk name, which remains the same throughout life, and a Qi'xtetem name, which is changed at these festivals. Thus, Nesk'ala'eta's (which is his Ki'xitk name) present Qi'xtetem name is Ati'xtcuxe'lus'ait, but at his next potlatch he intends to take the name of Kalci'kin. These names are also the property of the various gentes, each gens having its own names. In the list of gentes given above, the names enumerated are the Ki'xitk names of the members. In two cases only the Qi'xtetem names have been ascertained (see p. 429). When a man possesses several Sisaa'ka secrets he will distribute them among his children. When a girl marries, her father or mother may, after a child has been born to her, give one or several of their Sisaa'ka secrets to her husband, as his children make him a member of the gens. When a person gets to be old he gives away all his Sisaa'ka secrets. After any secret has been given away the giver must not use it any more. The crest and the Sisaa'ka carvings must not be loaned to others, but each person must keep his own carvings. The only exceptions are the carved headdresses and the raven rattles, which are not the property of any particular gens.

The laws regarding the potlatch are similar to those of the Kwakiutl. The receiver of a present becomes the debtor of the person who gave the potlatch. If the latter should die the debts become due to his heirs. If the debtor should die his heirs become responsible for the debt. Property is also destroyed at potlatches. This is not returned, and serves only to enhance the social position of the individual who performed this act. It is not necessary that all the property given by a person in a potlatch should be owned by him. He may borrow part of it from his friends, and has to repay it with interest. I was told, for instance, that a man borrowed a large copper-plate and burnt it at a potlatch. When doing so he had to name the price which he was going to pay to the owner in its stead. Hence that man he died, and his heirs are now responsible for the amount named at the potlatch.

The Ki'xitk is presided over by a female spirit, called Amitkitemi'x. Her abode is a cave in the woods, which she keeps shut from February till October, remaining all the while inside. In October she opens the door of her cave and sits in front of it. A woman is said to have been the first to find her. Amitkitemi'x invited her into her cave and taught

8:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1897
NEδ Bellacoola NEδ

every morning when the sun rises. He takes care that he rises promptly. The first six of these deities are grouped in pairs, and are believed to paint their faces with designs representing moon, stars, and rainbow. In the kᵊ'sint three deities make their appearance, and are represented by masks. Xᵊ'nᵊtsiwa and Xᵊmᵊxᵊmᵊkli'wa.a wear the design of the full moon, indicated on the mask of Xᵊ'nᵊtsiwa by a double curved line in red and black, the black outside, passing over forehead, cheeks, and upper lip. Xᵊmᵊxᵊmᵊkli'wa.a has a double curved line in red and black, the red outside, which passes over forehead, cheeks, and chin. Alemkᵊ'lik'a and Alemkᵊli'wa.a wear the design of the crescent, drawn in red and black, with differences similar to those between the first and second masks. The fifth Q'emq'emkᵊ'lik'a and Q'emq'emkᵊli'wa.a have designs representing stars, both wearing the same style of mask. The seventh is Qaka'sawa, whose face represents the blossom of a salmon-berry bush. The next in order, Kaki'lias (who wants to have blankets first), wears the design of the rainbow in black and blue. The ninth, A'ᵊmᵊ'k, wears on the head a mask representing a kingfisher, and is clothed in a bird-skin blanket. The last of the series is a woman called L'Ya'qᵊlᵊlas (the eater), the sister of the others. Her face is painted with the design of a bladder filled with grease. She figures in several legends as stealing provisions and personal by the people whom she has robbed.

The sisaox̌'k, which is danced at potlatches and other festivals of the clans, is presided over by a being that lives in the sun. A man who had gone out hunting met the sisaox̌'k and was instructed by him in the secrets of the dance. When he returned, he asked the people to clean their houses and to strew them with clean sand before he consented to enter. Then he danced the sisaox̌'k and told the people what he had seen. He said that the being had commanded them to perform this dance and to adorn themselves when dancing with carved headdresses with trails of cruiser skins, and to swing carved rattles. The man, later on, returned to the sun. Ever since that time the Hᵊ'mᵊtsa dance the sisaox̌'k. Besides this, it is stated that the raven gave each clan its secrets. Each clan has its peculiar carvings, which are used in the sisaox̌'k only, and are otherwise kept a profound secret, i. e., they are the sacred possessions of each clan. All clans, however, wear the beautiful carved headdresses and use the raven rattles, regardless of the carving they represent. Every time the sacred objects of a clan are shown to the people a potlatch is given. The sacred objects, although the property of the various clans, must nevertheless be acquired by each individual—that is to say, every free person has the right to acquire a certain group of carvings and names, according to the clan to which he or she belongs. Slaves and slaves' children, also illegitimate children, can not become sisaox̌'k. A person can not take a new carving, but must wait until it is given to him by his relatives—father, mother, or elder brother. Mark'ᵊsᵊ'nᵊq, the Indian, to whom I

8:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1897
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

owe my information regarding the clans, and who is a member of the gens Ialô'stimôt of the Taliô'mx·, stated that he had received the raven when he gave his first potlatch. At his second potlatch he received the eagle. He hoped that his mother would give him the whale at his next potlatch, and would at the same time divulge to him the secrets connected with it. In course of time, he said, he might get even others from his brother; but if the latter's children should prove to be very good, and develop very rapidly, his brother would probably give his secrets to his own children. At festivals, when a person acquires a new secret, he changes his name. Each person has two names, a kû'sint name, which remains through life, and a Xê'mtsica name, which is changed at these festivals. Thus, Nqsk'xlu'sta's (which is his kû'sint name) Xê'mtsica name was AL'ILEMNK'lae'alx·, but at his next potlatch he intended to take the name of Kalia'kia. These names are also the property of the various clans, each clan having its own names. When a man possesses several sisan'k· secrets, he will distribute them among his children. When a girl marries, her father or mother may, after a child has been born to her, give one or several of their sisan'k· secrets to her husband, as his children make him a member of her clan. When a person grows old, he gives away all his sisan'k· secrets. After any secret has been given away the giver must not use it any more. The crest and the sisan'k· carvings must not be loaned to others, but each person must keep his own carvings. The only exceptions are the carved headdresses and the raven rattles, which are not the property of any particular clan.

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The kû'sint is presided over by a female spirit, called Anatlikuta'al'x·. Her abode is a cave in the woods, which she keeps shut from February till October, remaining all the while inside. In October she opens the door of her cave and sits in front of it. A woman is said to have been the first to find her. Anatlikuta'al'x· invited her into her cave and taught her the secrets of the kû'sint. She wore ornaments of red cedar bark around her head, waist, and ankles; her face was blackened, her hair strewn with eagle down. She commanded the